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Hints and Suggestions To Leaders of Mission Study Classes



From Sea to Sea
The Dominion



He shall have dominion also from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends
of the earth.—Ps. 72, 8.

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Issued by the Missionary Prayer and Study Union
of the M. S. C. C.

Offices: 627 Confederation Life Building
TORONTO

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
GENERAL SYNOD, ARCHIVES



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GENERAL SUGGESTIONS.

Mission Study Classes are formed for the united study of Missions. Two people can learn much more of a subject if they get together and compare notes than if they study independently. Three can do better than two and each additional member should be a strength to the rest. As soon as the numbers are too great for this the class is too large. Six is perhaps an ideal number though ten or twelve may not be too many. If there are sixteen students it would probably be found better to divide the class into two circles of eight members each. Let the members of a class or circle be as nearly as possible equal in attainment, and above all things avoid having a leader who knows a great deal more of the subject than the other members.

We write here for those who are chosen to be leaders. Even if you do know more of the subject than the other members of your class, endeavour to conceal the fact as far as possible. Remember that you have been asked to lead the class in its study rather than to teach it. Much less are you asked to lecture to it. Your task will resemble not so much that of a teacher as the work of a Chairman of a Committee appointed to investigate facts and draw conclusions.

To carry on this work successfully it will manifestly be essential that the leader should have a clear definite programme in his own mind to which he will endeavour to keep his class. Let the number of minutes to be allowed for each part of the subject be marked down in your private memorandum, then keep

this programme and your watch in front of you and endeavour to hold the meeting to the time appointed, without, however, allowing the members of the class to see that you even have a fixed time in mind. Your programme must necessarily be somewhat elastic in its nature. While it may be necessary to prevent rambling off into irrelevant speeches, it will not do to choke off discussion of important and interesting matters which appeal to the minds of the class. No leader can possibly foresee every turn which may be taken in the conversation, hence it is necessary to be prepared for variation; yet the programme you have in mind should be followed as closely as is possible and convenient.

It should be remembered that the text-book is to be used as an aid in prosecuting the study of a subject. The purpose for which the class meets is not that the members may know perfectly the contents of the text-book. It is rather that by a judicious use of the book they may gain such a knowledge of Canada and Canadian Missions as will stimulate them and enable them to fulfil their own part in the work to which God is calling us in this day and generation.

In forming a class it will often be found well to have a general opening meeting at which the object and work of Mission Study Classes may be explained. Each member of the class undertakes:

1. To be regular and punctual in attendance.
2. To have a copy of the text-book and read carefully the lesson assigned.
3. To think out and prepare the problems assigned for discussion.
4. To prepare occasional individually assigned work.

Ask for the names of those who would like to join a class and point out that regular attendance is just as necessary for every member as it is for the leader.

While it is well to remember on the one hand, that the members of a class should be so thoroughly united in sympathy that no one will feel hesitation about taking part in the discussion, yet, on the other hand, much may be gained by variety of opinion.

As a rule, it is best to admit no visitors. If this rule be broken, it will probably mean embarrassment at least for the junior and more backward members, and if the visitor takes part in the discussion there is sure to be loss of time in explaining to him what you are doing. Even in the case of a Missionary from the Field, or some well-known expert, the rule should only be relaxed so far as to have such a one come to answer questions or possibly to give an address at some point in the course. The Missionary, having superior knowledge, should not be present during the Class Session.

The outlines given in this book are intended to be merely suggestive. Every leader, to be truly successful, will need to make his own plan which may possibly be quite different from that here given. The chief thing is to have a well prepared plan of some kind. To prepare the lesson, first of all, read the chapter in the text-book through carefully two or three times and make your own abstract of it, then decide upon and write down the aim you will pursue with the class in the study of the chapter. Select two or three problems for discussion which will contribute to the accomplishment of this aim, and write them out. Most leaders find it well to write out also a number of questions, or at least, of sub-topics for discussion. Write down then a complete programme for the meeting, with a list of subjects for prayer, taking care to make the programme sufficiently elastic to allow for unexpected turns. The inexperienced leader especially will need to be careful not to attempt too much. Having selected your aim for a given lesson discard everything which does not directly contribute to it.

Let every meeting be opened with prayer for the Divine blessing and direction. It is suggested that

the opening prayer be offered by the leader—either the collect for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity or some other suitable collect, and then let all unite in the Members' Prayer of the Missionary Prayer and Study Union and the Lord's Prayer.

Immediately after this proceed directly with the work. Avoid any formalities such as minute reading or discussion of business, as a fruitful means of losing time. Five minutes after the meeting has been called to order, the discussion should be in full progress. Call for reports—ask questions—draw out timid members—encourage discussion. As you draw each lesson to a conclusion, give a review question to which the answer is to be brought next time, then have a brief talk about the next lesson and draw up the assignment with the members. It is well to call for volunteers for individual assignments such as charts or reports, but to save time in the class, keep your explanation of exactly what you want done, to be given privately. After the assignment has been given, refer again to what has been learned, then read the passage of scripture selected or some other suitable passage, and spend the remaining time, which should be fifteen minutes at least in prayer for the subjects suggested by the study which has just been completed.

It is clear from what has been said that the leader will need to keep his preparation at least one lesson ahead of the other members of the class. As you progress in your course, keep constantly in prayer for the individual members of your class. Watch for awakening of interest which may lead to decisions as to life work, and never forget that, as a leader of the class, you have a deep burden of responsibility to God.

OPENING MEETING.

If a preparatory meeting should be held such as has been suggested, it will not be difficult to lead those present to express a wish to study our own country. Ask for reasons why they wish it. You

will probably get a variety of answers such as: "We ought to begin at home," "our country is growing rapidly," "we have a duty to our own settlers," "the great number of foreigners coming into our country demand attention," "we owe a great deal to our Indian Missions." Try to show that much of the work to be done by the whole Church of God depends on our young country being brought up as a Christian Nation.

Introduce the text-book. Show the need that existed for it. There was no other suitable book on Canada. Tell something of the author, whose name should be a household word with every Church family of Canada. He was General Secretary of the M. S. C. C. for eight years, and necessarily better qualified to prepare such a book than any other living man. Ask the class to decide upon the aim of the course. Several may be suggested, but have your own in mind which you may not think it necessary to announce. It may be to develop interest in and work for the West of Canada, to arouse a true missionary spirit for work at home and abroad, to try to call forth offers of personal service. But whatever you decide upon, there should be, not only the general desire to do something but a definite purpose in the leader's mind which should always include the deepening of the spirit of prayer.

It may possibly be found necessary to shorten the course by omitting some of the chapters. It is better to do this than to attempt to take two chapters in one lesson. If it is absolutely necessary to omit any, it may be found best to leave out 2 and 5. Then make the assignment of the first lesson and close with prayer for blessing on the Study Class.

ASSIGNMENT OF LESSON I.

Aim: To endeavour to grasp the value of Canada if held by the Church of Christ.

Problems:

1. How will the physical features of Canada necessarily influence its future population?

2. What will be the result of the new railways upon our natural resources and our new population?

3. Estimate the value to the world of a Christian people living in such a country.

Special assignment:

1. Ask one member to see that the special map of Canada is prepared and put in its place for the meeting. It is much better not to attend to matters like this yourself.

2. Ask another member to enlarge the chart on page 19.

OUTLINE OF LESSON I.

1. Ask for instances of the effect geography has had upon other nations. What does the size of Canada tell us as to its future population? Call for the prepared chart and have a member explain it. But there are great tracts of country in the world uninhabited—e. g., the desert of Sahara or the Arctic regions. What do you think concerning the probabilities as to our country becoming populated? What is there here to attract settlers? Draw attention to our rich resources but do not allow the talk to dwell on them too long.

2. What are the natural means of reaching the inland parts of the country? Show the value of waterways as a means of communication. But these are not sufficient. Hence, to open up the country, we needed railways. What has the C. P. R. done for Canada? What will the G. T. P. do and the C. N. R. The new railways will enable us to develop the hitherto unreached and unknown resources of the country in mineral wealth. Have some one point out on the map the regions that they will open up. They will bring new settlers to till the land, and the output of grain and other products will be immensely increased. Here is the place to display pictures or railway folders if any in the class have brought them.

3. What progress has been made in the last few years? What is the progress likely to be in the next few years? What must be God's purpose for such a country? What will be the effect upon our country if we neglect the new settlers? What responsibility is laid upon us towards the rest of the world?

Read Deut. 8 : 7-18, and close with prayer that we may show our thankfulness to God for the country He has given us by seeking to fulfil His purpose for us and that, as a people, we may be kept from self-satisfaction.

ASSIGNMENT OF LESSON II.

Aim: To grasp the composite nature of the Canadian people and its value in the Church of Christ

1. What are the advantages to Canada and the disadvantages of having such a greatly mixed population?

2. Consider the special power of appeal possessed by the Church of England for the various classes of people mentioned.

3. In what respect should the presence of these varied elements in Canada affect our Foreign Missionary work?

Instead of these problems it might be found well to have a fourfold debate as to which class of people should receive most of our attention, (a) the aborigines; (b) the settlers belonging to our own Church; (c) those belonging to corrupt forms of Christianity; (d) non-Christians.

OUTLINE OF LESSON II.

Begin by asking for the original inhabitants of the country, then the names of newcomers in succession, and arrange them on the blackboard for convenience of reference.

If you have a debate, it may conveniently come next:

The aborigines claim attention because they are in the position of lost sheep in the wilderness. They perish with hunger spiritually and physically. We have the land of the Indians. True, they have been evangelized, but they are, and always will be, children needing care.

The case for the settlers will probably make a strong appeal. Unless we reach them promptly we lose valuable ground. They will, if cared for now, make strong our nation and our Church. They will be the home Church of the next generation. They are coming in such numbers and are all so overwhelmed with the cares of setting in a new country that spiritual things are likely to be overlooked. The proportion of real Christian people who have come with them is small.

The French and other Roman Catholics are rapidly making Canada a more Roman country than Spain or Italy. The members of the Eastern Churches are also injuring our national life. A vital Christianity is needed for these, either for their evangelization, or for their reformation, if that be possible.

With Jews, with Mormons from the United States, with Hindus, Chinese and other Orientals in Canada, we have full opportunity at our own doors for doing what is usually called Foreign Missionary work.

1. It is an advantage to have a broad outlook on all the world and to gather into our national life many and diverse elements of good. It will let us learn of other parts of the world and will show us that the Anglo-Saxon is not the only human being. But it is dangerous for us to have a rapid influx of illiterate foreigners. There is danger of lack of power to assimilate these elements.

2. The Church of England appeals to Eskimos and Indians because of what it has already done for them;

to our own settlers, because it is for many the Church of their fathers; to Eastern and Foreign Churches, because of its ecclesiastical system and orderly form of worship.

3. The presence of the foreign element gives us foreign missionary work in our own country which should open our eyes to the need abroad and help to prepare us for foreign service.

If you do not take the debate then call for brief comments on the special needs of each class of people as you have the names on the blackboard. Try to lead the class to see that these claims are not competitive but cumulative. If you have time and the debate has not fully touched them, follow with assignments 2 and 3.

Read Psalm 72, and close with prayer for these various races.

ASSIGNMENT OF LESSON III.

Aim: To value what has been received and learn to give as freely.

1. What has been the result upon Canada's religious life of help given from England?
2. What help is being given now?
3. How do we in the M. S. C. C. endeavour to discharge the duty we owe to these Societies?

The members may be asked to bring specimens of the magazines issued by the different English Societies. Assign to separate individuals the study of each Society and its special work.

OUTLINE OF LESSON III.

1. How was Protestant Christianity first brought to Canada? What was the original purpose of S. P. G.? What are the steps by which it came to care for the heathen also? S. P. G. originally simply cared for

our own countrymen in foreign parts, then for slaves on the plantations, then for the heathen. To what Society is it due that the Indians and Eskimos of Canada are nearly all evangelized now? What is the work for which the C. M. S. exists? Then why must its grants to N. W. Canada be withdrawn? To whom does it leave the responsibility for evangelizing our immigrant heathen population.

2. Though decreasing its aid C. M. S. has not yet entirely withdrawn and S. P. G. continues to give valuable assistance. Call for accounts of the work now being done by C. & C. C. S., S. P. C. K., B. & F. B. S., R. T. S., and L. J. S., letting each one show specimens of magazines.

3. Draw out from the class that our duties to these Societies may best be paid by following their example in caring for the heathen, for our own kith and kin in need, and for the needy parts of our own country. But what work is there that we, as a Church, have not yet taken up ourselves and so should support through the older Societies? These are (a) the work among the Jews, with which M. S. C. C. is not yet organically connected and (b) the Bible Society. Make it clear that this is the helper of all Missionary Societies, every one of which depends upon it. It has been estimated that properly to support the work done by the Bible Society for us, we should give to it ten per cent. of all our gifts to Missions. This would be only paying a just debt.

Read Thessalonians 2. Prayer—for missionary work in Canada, for the societies, and for grace to follow their example.

ASSIGNMENT OF LESSON IV.

Aim: To acquire a knowledge of our equipment for the work before

1. Show whether Canada to-day is more of a missionary field or a missionary force.

2. How was he way prepared for the formation of M. S. C. C. as to both Home and Foreign work?

3. How have the three "Movements" helped us in the M. S. C. C.?

Have ready for distribution copies of the constitution of the Missionary Prayer & Study Union.

OUTLINE OF LESSON IV.

This is a most important lesson. Here we come into direct contact with our own work. This lesson should point out the practical way in which our work may be carried on.

1. Encourage frank discussion under this head. Then if you find, as is probable, that the general opinion appears to be that Canada is still a mission field rather than a force, ask to have it compared with India or China in this respect, and, keeping the comparison in mind, to tell whether it would be right to appeal to the United States or to Germany, to send Missionaries to Canada as they do to India or China. If not, why not? Then show that Canada no longer depends for help on a foreign country though still obtaining aid from the motherland. Try to arouse here a feeling of independence and to show that, while we have much to do within our own borders, yet we could be, and in some sense we are rather a force than a field.

2. What was the first attempt of the Canadian Church at Missionary work? Tell how Algoma led on to a little more being attempted. How had interest in foreign missions already been shown? Who was then sent out to the heathen? Trace the work of D. & F. M. S., C. C. M. S., and W. A., up to the formation of M. S. C. C.

3. For what does each of the three movements stand? Missionaries, Intelligence, Funds. Not exclusively so, of course, in any one case, for no one of these three can get on without the other two, and

all need prayer. How has the S. V. M. U. helped us?—the L. M. M.?—the Y. P. M. M.? What is the work of our Missionary Prayer & Study Union? Be clear on this point in drawing out the need for some definite way to stimulate prayer and missionary study, so that each member may be quickened in a desire to do something.

Read Romans 10:1 to 18. Prayer, for these organizations—and it might be well to keep the Members' Prayer until the close of this meeting.

ASSIGNMENT OF LESSON V.

Aim: To understand the responsibilities of the East.

1. Discuss the needs of the Eastern Dioceses and determine which need is most prevalent.
2. Consider the resources of the Eastern Dioceses and determine what are their best advantages.
3. What encouraging signs have lately been seen?

It may be found well to assign each Diocese to some individual member of the class.

Ask some one to enlarge the chart on page 20.

OUTLINE OF LESSON V.

1 and 2. In this discussion write on the black-board the name of the Diocese—then discuss its needs and difficulties as well as its advantages, and set down what seems most striking—thus:

Nova Scotia: Great possibilities,
Material wealth,
Need for development,
Increase of population,
Inspiring history.

Do each of the other Dioceses in the same way and then draw out answers to 1 and 2.

Among the signs of encouragement will be—increase in contributions, especially since the work of the L. M. M., the formation of the M. P. & S. U. Then show that an increase in the circulation of the "New Era" will naturally follow.

Read Psalm 67. Prayer for Diocesan Missions, an increase of the missionary spirit and a deepening of the sense of responsibility.

ASSIGNMENT OF LESSON VI.

Aim: To hear the call of the West.

1. But a few years ago Bishop Sullivan stated that Algoma could never be expected to become self-supporting. What has changed this outlook? In what other Dioceses has a similar change taken place?

2. In what Dioceses do the prospects now seem dull? What duty does the Church owe to them?

3. Show how to be ready for rapid development.

Have some one enlarge the chart on page 21, and ask two others to prepare talks—one on Bishop Horden and the other on Bishop Bompas. These should be brief, not to exceed three minutes each.

OUTLINE OF LESSON VI.

This lesson will need free use of map and chart. Have the chart explained and illustrate by the map at the same time, then following up each Diocese in turn, ask when it began, and how, what has been its development, what does it need most at present. Tabulate the needs.

1. It was the discovery of valuable mines which developed Algoma and led to a great influx of settlers. Where have similar discoveries taken place and where may they occur?

2 and 3. But in any case we must regard the lost sheep and seek to care for them. The one way to prepare for the inrush is to occupy the field first. Illustrate from the action of Bishop Bompas when gold was discovered in Yukon. If there is time, have the three minute talks on Bishop Horden and Bishop Bompas.

Read St. John 21 : 15 to 17. Prayer for lonely missionaries, for those heavily burdened with new work, for the settlers.

ASSIGNMENT OF LESSON VII.

Aim: To estimate the magnitude of the task before us and to count the cost.

1. Which of the difficulties mentioned in this chapter are peculiar to Canada, and which belong to all missionary work?

2. Why do the former present a special challenge to us?

3. How are the other difficulties to be met in all parts of the world? Illustrate from the story of missionary work at large.

OUTLINE OF LESSON VII.

1. Begin by asking why Canada as a Mission Field presents special difficulties. Write the answers on the blackboard. Distances, sparse settlement, isolation, conditions of life, rapid inrush of settlers who often come with defective training, scarcity of labourers, lethargy of the Church at large. Then ask the class to mark out those difficulties which belong equally to other parts of the world, i. e., hard conditions of life, scarcity of labourers, lethargy of the Church.

2. Take up the remaining difficulties separately and draw out by questioning that as a country becomes developed and filled up, the distant parts will be more

readily reached, the settlements closer, the incoming settlers will be Canadianized and their present training, not their past, will make or mar our national life. When is it necessary to reach them if we are to do it at all and why?

3. Coming to the difficulties, ask for instances of hard conditions of life in the far East in tropical climates, and show how devotion to Christ has enabled His servants to endure all in His name. Show how the need everywhere is a need for men. What has our Lord told us to do for the supply of this need? Finally get the class to say that all difficulties must yield to the power of God. This will lead naturally to the next lesson.

Read St. Matthew 9:27 to 38. Prayer for more labourers and for power to overcome difficulties.

ASSIGNMENT OF LESSON VIII.

Aim: To know what my part is now.

1. What are the needs of Canada as a Mission Field at the present time?
2. In view of the pressing need and the difficulties which we have seen, how can our Church fulfil the task before her?
3. How may you begin?

OUTLINE OF LESSON VI

This lesson is the culminating point of the course. If the lessons have so far fulfilled their purpose, the members of the class should be eager to take their share in the work to which God is calling our Church in Canada.

1. Begin by a rapid review. Canada has vast resources and is opening up rapidly. There is a varied population to be reached and it is increasing by about

a quarter of a million every year. Ask what lesson of warning comes to us from the Western States. How are we to prevent similar lawlessness in our own country?

2. Draw out from the class the various kinds of work mentioned in the text-book, but do not allow the discussion to become impractical by drifting to matters in which those present have no direct share. Whatever our part may be, whence will all the power have to come. Avoid above all things letting the lesson close with a mere pious remark to the effect that we can do nothing without the Divine blessing. Rather seek to develop the conviction, that in the presence of such difficulties as we have seen, in the face of such an unparalleled opportunity as is now rapidly passing, all our human power, organization and preparation stand confessedly unable to accomplish anything.

How can the work be done? How was it done in the first century? The same Spirit is ready to work now, but the problem before us is to persuade Christian people to come into touch with Him so that He may work through them as living agents. Prayer, continuous, earnest, believing prayer is the one secret of success.

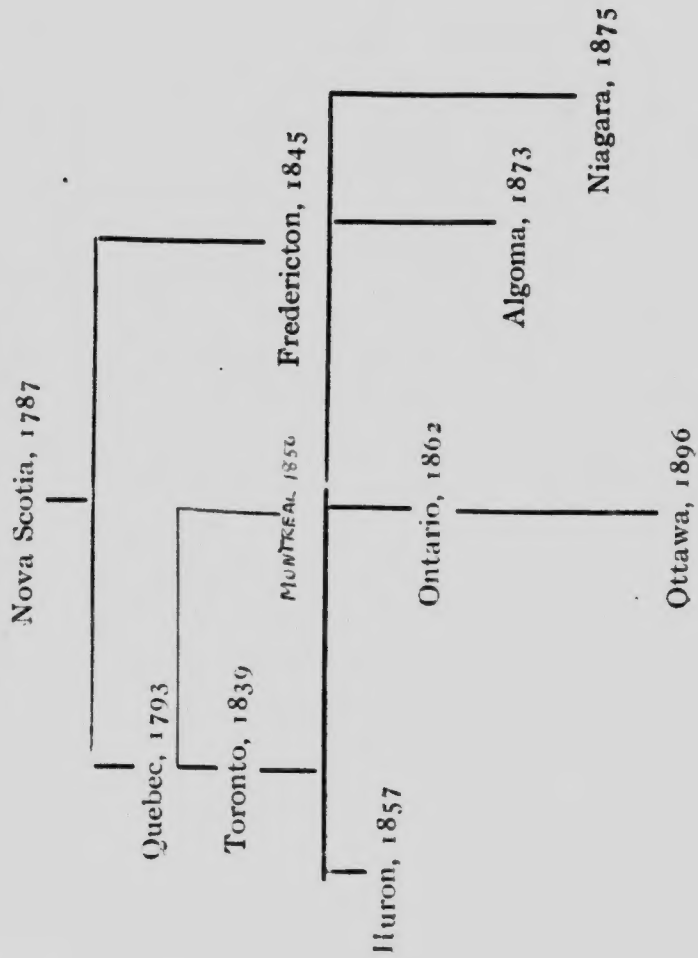
That leader will best succeed in bringing his class to this conviction who has already given himself to intercession for the class, for the Canadian Church, and for the whole world.

Read St. John 15 : 1 to 16, and close with a period of devotion during which the members may be asked to yield themselves afresh to God for His service.



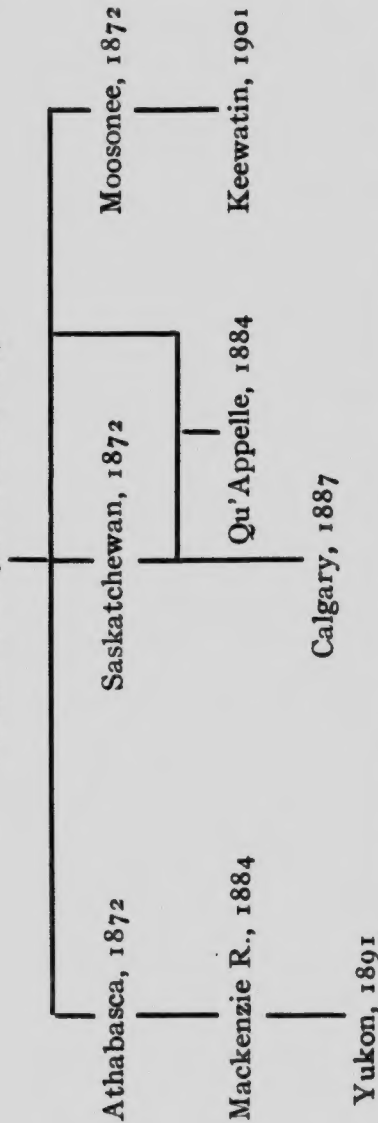
COMPARATIVE AREAS EUROPE AND CANADA.

PROVINCE OF CANADA



PROVINCE OF RUPERT'S LAND

Diocese of Rupert's Land, 1849



PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Diocese of (British) Columbia, 1859

